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ABSTRACT

The National Education Association (NEA) regards the misuse and abuse of part-time, temporary, and nontenure track faculty appointments as one of the most serious problems confronting American higher education. This report discusses the following topics and gives NEA's recommendations to colleges and universities: (1) categories of part-time, temporary and nontenure track faculty; (2) the appropriate use of part-time and temporary appointments; (3) academic due process for part-time and temporary faculty members; (4) security of employment for part-time faculty; (5) participation of part-time and temporary faculty in governance; (6) conditions of part-time and temporary faculty employment; (7) compensation of part-time faculty members; (8) the abuse of nontenure track appointments; and (9) part-time and temporary faculty in collective bargaining. In conclusion, the recommendation is made that each institution immediately begin to develop a handbook of policies on part-time and temporary faculty employment that incorporates the principles set forth in NEA policy statements. (KM)

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*To Promote
Academic Justice
and Excellence*

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON

Part-time,
Temporary &
Nontenure Track
Faculty
Appointments

Members of the 1987-1988 NEA Standing Committee on Higher Education

James M. Davenport, Chairperson
Washtenaw (MI) Community College

Byron W. Bender
Univeristy of Hawaii-Manoa

Betty J. Cunningham
Richland County (SC) Public Schools

Elizabeth Friot
Metropolitan (CO) State College

Patricia Gozemba
Salem (MA) State College

David A. Jerde
St. Cloud (MN) State University

Alba N. Lebron de Ayala
University of Puerto Rico

Priscilla McGuire
Colebrook (NH) Academy

T. Jean Peters
Mt. Hood (OR) Community College

VirginiaAnn Shadwick
California State University-San Francisco

Martha Stergois
Student Representative
California State University-San Diego

Gerald W. Waldrop
Gadsden (AL) State Community College

Roy Weatherford
University of South Florida

Part-time Faculty Consultants

Katharine B. Finney
Temple University

Sherna Gluck
California State University-Long Beach

T. Jean Peters
Mt. Hood (OR) Community College

Staff Consultant

Gerie B. Bledsoe
Coordinator of Higher Education
NEA Affiliate Services

This report was developed by the 1986-1987 Standing Committee with the assistance of part-time faculty consultants and NEA staff. It was approved as an elaboration of policy by the NEA Executive Committee. Members of the 1986-1987 Standing Committee not listed above include: Janell Beebe, Glenn Bowman, John Bracey, Stewart Doty, and Rosemary Irwin (Student Representative).

Introduction

The misuse and abuse of part-time, temporary, and nontenure track faculty appointments constitutes one of the most serious problems confronting American higher education.¹ This situation was recognized in 1976 by the National Education Association when it adopted the following policy resolution, which was amended in 1986:

The National Education Association believes that part-time faculty should be employed only when an educational program requires specialized training or expertise not available in the full-time faculty and when the need for such training and expertise does not justify more than half-time employment. Part-time faculty should receive the same salary and fringe benefits as full-time faculty prorated according to the workload. The Association also believes that part-time faculty should not be employed for the primary purpose of reducing instructional budgets or for the purpose of reducing the number of full-time faculty positions.²

This resolution serves today as the foundation for a more comprehensive statement on part-time faculty and is clearly applicable to contending with the misuse of temporary and nontenure track appointments.

According to the NEA's 1986 *Statement on Academic and Intellectual Freedom and Tenure in Higher Education*, academic freedom, tenure, and educational quality are being "undermined by the excessive use of part-time faculty members." These faculty members are usually expected to work for substandard compensation, without security of employment or due process, and under conditions which "place at risk the value of the education being provided to their students." NEA is concerned about the welfare of the individuals being exploited by this system and the ramifications of these practices in higher education.

The 1986 *Statement* also notes that similar conditions apply to full-time faculty in non-tenureable positions and concludes that, "Teachers and scholars who are subjected to lengthy or continuous probationary status are less likely ever to exercise freely their rights as citizens and as teachers." Tenure

quotas and artificially high standards for earning tenure are also seen as having a debilitating effect on institutions. The 1986 *Statement* observes:

While NEA supports all proper efforts for an institution to seek and maintain academic excellence, it decries negative decisions on tenure motivated primarily by a desire to retain budgetary "flexibility." Such policies damage the morale of the continuing faculty as surely as they destroy the ideals and aspirations of their victims.³

The NEA 1986 *Statement on Professional Compensation and the Finances of Higher Education* terms the hiring of part-timers a "false economy" and calls on institutions to hire qualified full-time faculty whenever possible. This statement recognizes only one legitimate use of part-time appointments (last-minute enrollment increases) and reconfirms NEA's 1976 resolution by calling on institutions not to appoint part-timers primarily to reduce instructional costs or the size of the regular, full-time faculty or academic staff.⁴

Categories

Categories of Part-time, Temporary, and Nontenure Track Faculty

NEA recognizes that, just as American higher education is diverse, the misuse and abuse of part-time, temporary, and nontenure track faculty take different forms at the various types of institutions. This diversity makes it difficult to develop principles and policies to cover all variations.

To attempt this process, however, the following categories of employment, defined by current use and policy, will be utilized or implied herein:

1. *Part-time faculty members*—instructors who have less than a full-time teaching load and are usually compensated at a rate below that of regular full-time faculty. Part-time faculty are divided herein into two sub-categories for the purpose of policy-making:
 - a. *Regular part-timers*—those holding one (or more) part-time appointments and tending to establish long-term employment relationships with an institution through regular and repeated appointments. This group includes “full-time part-timers” (those who teach a full-time load for part-time compensation);
 - b. *Irregular part-timers*—those who usually hold a full-time position elsewhere within or outside of academia and/or teach part-time only on an irregular or “casual” basis;⁵
2. *Temporary faculty members*—full-time appointees, retained on a short-term basis, usually a year or two, and for special purposes without reasonable expectation of continuing, long-term employment at the institution;
3. *Nontenure track faculty members*—full-time appointees retained to teach or conduct research who may have expectations of continuing, long-term employment without benefit of regular faculty status or the reasonable expectation of being tenured. In some institutions these individuals are appointed annually on term contracts, while in other institutions they enjoy forms of employment security similar to academic tenure.
4. *Regular, full-time faculty*—those faculty, nontenured or tenured, who are on the tenure track and enjoy full faculty status.

Excluded from this report are certain other categories of academic employment where abuses are known to exist, e.g., researchers supported by grant funds or "soft money," and graduate and post-doctoral students who teach.

The Appropriate Use of Part-time and Temporary Appointments

NEA recognizes that appropriate and legitimate uses of part-time and temporary faculty exist. First, when confronted by unexpected enrollment increases, especially in basic courses, institutions may appoint part-time and temporary faculty to teach classes when regular, full-time faculty are unavailable.

Second, when an institution decides to offer only one or two courses in a specialized area outside of the full-time faculty's areas of competency, it may legitimately make part-time and temporary, short-term appointments. Third, when an institution wants to initiate, or experiment with, a new course or program of study, it may appoint part-time or temporary faculty members for a brief period of time. Fourth, temporary faculty are frequently retained to fill in for regular full-time faculty on leave or sabbatical. Fifth, artists- or writers-in-residence are frequently and appropriately appointed on temporary contracts.

After reviewing all available data and reports on current practice in the academic community, such as the Carnegie Foundation's *College: The Undergraduate Experience*,⁶ NEA concludes that part-time and temporary appointments are being used improperly at many institutions. Therefore, NEA offers this initial recommendation:

Colleges and universities should convert all improper part-time, temporary, and nontenure track appointments to regular, full-time faculty positions whenever feasible and as soon as practical, and adopt policies through faculty governance and/or collective bargaining that will prevent the improper and excessive use of these types of appointments in the future.

Improper use is defined as all uses that do not meet the legitimate uses enumerated above.

Academic Due Process for Part-time and Temporary Faculty Members

Part-time and temporary faculty members must be afforded academic due process rights conforming to those of regular, full-time faculty.⁷ These rights are best protected by procedures that include, but are not limited to:

1. timely appointment letters that clearly specify the nature of their relationship with the institution in the short and long term;
2. timely written notice of reappointment and nonreappointment, the standards and criteria on which they will be evaluated for reappointment, and any change in the terms of their status or relationship to the department or institution;
3. academic due process, i.e., the right to confer over the terms and conditions of their appointment, the right to file grievances or appeal negative decisions, to have a fair hearing, and to receive timely settlement of their grievances. In particular, faculty must be guaranteed the right to complete the term of their contracts, except for just cause, and to appeal through appropriate procedures the premature termination of their contract;
4. fair and equitable evaluation by peers or other appropriate persons, with the results of such evaluation being given to them in writing and with an opportunity to respond and seek remedy.

Security of Employment for Part-time Faculty

Institutions should provide qualified regular part-time faculty with suitable forms of employment security after an appropriate probationary period. The expectation of continuing employment, except for just cause, is the proven and accepted way to assure academic and intellectual freedom, and employment security.⁸

The appointment of large numbers of part-time, temporary, and other categories of instructional and research staff who are denied tenure or employment security, academic due process, and participation in faculty governance has a negative effect on the morale of the entire institution.⁹ Limitations placed on these individuals by such practices reduce the status of all instructional staff at the institution—tenured or nontenured, full-time or part-time, regular or temporary.

Part-time faculty who are appointed repeatedly over an extended period of time should be evaluated through the procedures, and according to the standards, generally applied to full-time faculty appointments. Notice of nonreappointment should be given to these individuals according to the same standards of notice accorded to regular, full-time faculty.

Participation of Part-time and Temporary Faculty in Governance

Part-time faculty, especially regular part-timers, and temporary faculty should be included in faculty governance and decision-making processes at the institution. Regular part-timers and temporary faculty should be involved along with full-time faculty in the determination of course content, goals, schedules, and instructional materials. They should also be involved in the overall evaluation of their courses. Regular part-time faculty should participate in the work of committees responsible for oversight and coordination of the courses or programs that they teach. Ways should be found to elicit formal suggestions and comments from all part-time and temporary faculty about their courses and other professional duties.

Regular part-time faculty should be appointed to committees responsible for making recommendations on policies governing the employment of part-time faculty and on hearing their appeals and settling their grievances. Representation is especially critical when their department or institution develops a comprehensive policy handbook or manual for part-time and temporary employment.¹⁰

Part-time and temporary faculty should seek to participate in faculty committees and decision-making processes as part of their professional responsibilities. The type and extent of participation will vary from institution to institution, as determined through faculty governance processes. These additional responsibilities would justify additional compensation, as set forth below.

Conditions of Part-time and Temporary Faculty Employment

Institutions should recognize that part-time and temporary faculty need and deserve suitable working conditions in order to fulfill their professional responsibilities. Classroom and laboratory facilities should be conducive to teaching, learning, and other forms of educational and artistic endeavor. Part-timers and temporary faculty should have access to adequate office space in order to meet with and advise their students. They should be given adequate administrative services to facilitate their work. When research and publication are required for advancement or earning tenure, it is especially important that suitable facilities and support be available.

All new faculty members, including part-time and temporary faculty, should be given a comprehensive orientation about the institution, its mission and goals, the role of the faculty and other components, and the rights of faculty and students. Those beginning their career or new to the institution should be guided by regular, full-time faculty members whose workloads should be adjusted to accommodate significant responsibilities in this area.

Compensation of Part-time Faculty Members

According to NEA's 1976 resolution, part-time faculty members should be paid at the same rate as their full-time colleagues. For part-timers this means *pro rata* salaries and fringe benefits. Salary levels should be based on credentials, experience, and, where the faculty and institution agree, the quality of their professional activities. Normally regular part-timers, especially those with continuing appointments, should enjoy most of the fringe benefits, such as a retirement plan, accorded to regular, full-time faculty. Faculty development programs should also be opened to qualified part-timers.

Pro-rata compensation should reduce the use of part-time appointments while increasing the number of regular, full-time faculty appointments. In all likelihood, the financial incentive for institutions to hire part-time and temporary faculty would be largely eliminated.¹¹ This was NEA's position in 1976, and it remains the best way to solve the current problem more than a decade later.

The implementation of such compensation policies may carry with it reasonable expectations that part-time faculty increase the amount of non-class time that they devote to their overall professional responsibilities.

The Abuse of Nontenure Track Appointments

Many colleges and universities have placed and continue to place large numbers of instructional and research faculty in a variety of nontenure track appointments, frequently at a substandard rate of compensation, usually without academic due process or expectation of earning tenure.¹² As with the use of part-time faculty, these widespread practices have contributed to concerns about the quality of our colleges and universities and the status of academic and intellectual freedom.

Normally, a temporary appointment should not exceed two years. Non-tenure track or temporary appointments should never be used as a substitute for the probationary period for faculty members who should be on the tenure track, although the institution may convert these positions into a tenure-track position for bona fide reasons with the consent of the faculty. In such cases, the individual should be given credit for full-time (and part-time) service toward the probationary period normally required for earning tenure.

Larger public university systems are perhaps the most guilty of hiring instructional staff on the nontenure track. Such appointments are frequently made in remedial programs, "writing centers," and service courses, such as teaching English as a second language.¹³ NEA believes, as stated above, that these positions should be converted to tenure track positions since there is no compelling reason to deny these individuals the right to earn tenure.

When positions are converted to the tenure track, institutions should take care to evaluate nontenure track faculty affected by the policy according to the standards and criteria appropriate to their duties and responsibilities at the institution. For example, if publication has not been a criterion for reappointment to the previous nontenure track position, it normally should not be introduced during the conversion process. Faculty members who have been fulfilling satisfactorily their professional duties in a nontenurable position should be accorded prior consideration during the conversion process. The standards and criteria for being appointed to the tenure track should not be raised to levels inconsistent with the responsibilities of the position in an attempt to preclude the retention of those currently employed.

Part-time and Temporary Faculty in Collective Bargaining

Collective bargaining represents the best way to develop comprehensive policies for part-time and temporary faculty employment. Practice regarding part-timers in bargaining varies across the nation, and this diversity again makes it difficult to establish principles applicable to all institutions. Overall, there seems to be a recent trend toward organizing more part-timers and including them in full-time faculty units. (In most instances, full-time temporary and nontenure track faculty members have already been included in full-time faculty units.)

Considering the issues and the experience gained by NEA and its affiliates over the past two decades, it is growing more evident that full-time faculty generally are more aware of a community of interest with part-time and temporary faculty. If the policies proposed above are implemented—*pro-rata* pay and fringe benefits, due process, tenure, and governance rights—there would be little doubt about these categories of academics sharing a greater community of interest.

Where part-timers have been included in full-time units, policies have been developed that tend to eliminate both the abuse and misuse of part-timers.¹⁴ If regular part-timers and temporary faculty are to be included in the faculty governance processes, it seems inconsistent to exclude them from full-time faculty bargaining units.

Although the NEA recognizes that each of its affiliates has the right to determine its own policy in this area, it calls on full-time faculty to consider seriously the representation of their part-time colleagues through their full-time units as an important step towards ending the misuse and abuse of these types of appointments.

Conclusion and Final Recommendations

Because of perceived financial necessity, the desire to maintain administrative "flexibility," and the availability of un- and under-employed academics, institutions have hired upwards of 300,000 part-time, temporary, and nontenure track faculty members instead of full-time, regular faculty. Although this practice may have helped institutions live within their budgets and meet enrollment increases, it has denied many qualified individuals full-time, regular academic employment. It has also created several underclasses on campus which are separated from the "privileged" class of regular, tenure-track faculty. For many institutions, this practice has become an easy way to circumvent the tenure system and avoid a "tenured-in" faculty.¹⁵

Instead of grappling with the budgetary and personnel problems associated with tenure track faculty, institutions have created a revolving door situation featuring disenfranchised part-timers, "folding-chair" appointments, tenure quotas, unreasonable criteria for earning tenure, nontenure track appointments, "rolling" contracts, and other improper practices.

Recent studies of the American professoriate and undergraduate education clearly illustrate the negative impact of these practices on higher education. Unfortunately, few of these studies offer viable, concrete proposals for reversing these conditions and reclaiming academic integrity and excellence.¹⁶ To reduce significantly the number of part-time and temporary faculty positions by converting them into regular, full-time positions will require major increases in financial support. To provide adequate support facilities for part-time and temporary faculty will also require additional financing.

Eliminating the misuse and abuse of part-time and temporary faculty will require major shifts in opinion among regular faculty members, administrators, and trustees. All must recognize the nature and extent of the problem and work together to resolve it. Extensive short- and long-term plans that reflect economic necessity and humane consideration for the victims of these abuses must be developed through faculty governance and collective bargaining processes.

NEA recommends, therefore, that: each institution should immediately begin to develop a handbook of policies on part-time and temporary faculty employment that incorporates the principles set forth in NEA policy statements.

Each institution should begin to allocate the funds necessary to convert improper part-time positions.¹⁷ As soon as possible, the compensation of all part-timers should be prorated.

NEA state affiliates should encourage and support the conversion of part-time positions to full-time positions among public (and private) institutions. In most instances this will require increased regular or supplemental appropriations by state legislatures. If after a reasonable period of time colleges and universities continue the misuse and abuse of these types of appointments, NEA state affiliates should work with faculty organizations to develop appropriate legislative remedies.

On the basis of long-standing policy and the principles and recommendations specified above, NEA strongly urges that steps be taken immediately to eliminate the misuse and abuse of part-time, temporary, and nontenure track appointments. Dramatic action is necessary in this area, as it is elsewhere, to restore excellence and equity in American higher education for this and future generations of students, teachers, and scholars.

NOTES

1. Ernest L. Boyer. *College: The Undergraduate Experience in America*. New York: Harper and Row. 1987. pp. 136-137. and Howard R. Bowen and Jack H. Schuster. *American Professors: A National Resource Imperiled*. New York: Oxford Press. 1986. pp. 60-65. The latter authors estimate that the number of part-time faculty increased from 82,000 in 1960 to 220,000 in 1980.

Studies of part-time faculty in specific states and types of institutions are relatively numerous. Neither the Standing Committee nor the NEA's higher education staff reviewed all of this literature or research. Although several key studies and reports were considered, the Committee's observations and conclusions are based largely on the individual members' experiences at their institutions, which range from large research universities to small community colleges.

Other works that the Committee found useful and recommends to readers include.

David Leslie, Samuel E. Kellams, and G. Manny Gunne. *Part-time Faculty in American Higher Education*. New York: Praeger. 1982.

Howard P. Tuckman, Jaime Caldwell, and William Vogler. "Part-Timers and the Academic Labor Market of the Eighties." *American Sociologist*. November 1978. pp. 88-104.

M. Elizabeth Wallace (ed.). *Part-time Academic Employment in the Humanities*. New York: Modern Language Association. 1984.

The Committee also reviewed George E. Biles and Howard P. Tuckman. *Part-time Faculty Personnel Management Policies*. New York: American Council on Education/Macmillan. 1986.

A bibliography is available in *Thought & Action: The NEA Higher Education Journal*. Spring 1987. pp. 59-62.

2. "Misuse of Part-time Faculty." Resolution E-16. *NEA Handbook*. 1986-87. p. 231.
3. "Statement on Academic and Intellectual Freedom and Tenure." *The NEA Higher Education Advocate*. January 30, 1987. p. 3.
4. "Statement on Professional Compensation and the Finances of Higher Education." *The NEA Higher Education Advocate*. January 30, 1987. pp. 6-7.
5. Howard P. Tuckman, William D. Vogler, and Jaime Caldwell, *Part-time Faculty Series* (Washington: AAUP. 1977-78), established six categories of part-timers: retired persons, graduate students, "hopefuls," "moonlighters," "homeworkers," and "outsiders."
6. This report estimates that 25 percent of all faculty in four-year colleges and universities are part-timers, and recommends that this be reduced to 20 percent. Boyer. p. 137.
7. The Standing Committee reviewed closely "The Status of Part-time Faculty," a 1980 report by a subcommittee of Committee A of the American Association of University Professors. *AAUP Policy Documents and Reports* (1984). pp. 47-57. It should be noted, however, that this report and its recommendations were not endorsed or adopted by Committee A, the AAUP Council, or Annual Meeting. For a statement of academic due process in non-collective bargaining situations, readers should refer to the "1982 Recommended Institutional Regulations on Academic Freedom and Tenure," which are also found in this publication, pp. 21-30.
8. See the NEA's 1986 "Statement on Academic and Intellectual Freedom" cited above.

9. Bowen and Schuster, pp. 64, 144. Also, "1986 Survey of NEA Higher Education Members," typescript (NEA Research, 1987). More than half of NEA members believe that tenure quotas, temporary contracts, and "rolling" contracts inhibit academic freedom on their campuses, but only 10 percent believe that there are too many part-timers on staff.
10. The NEA will develop a handbook (during 1987-88) to guide faculty representatives at collective bargaining and non-collective bargaining institutions in drafting policy manuals for part-time and temporary faculty appointments. For more information contact the NEA Office of Higher Education, Suite 320, 1201 16th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.
11. As noted in the body of this report, the Standing Committee believes that there are legitimate uses of regular and irregular part-time faculty. The Committee tends to agree with Bowen and Schuster (p. 190-191) that part-timers in substantial numbers will always be found in higher education. However, a return to the number of part-timers in 1970 seems a reasonable goal—a process that Bowen and Schuster estimate would produce 28,000 jobs for regular, full-time faculty.
12. At this point, the Standing Committee does not have enough data on the number of nontenure track faculty. Some data has been published by AAUP in its "Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession," *Academe: The Bulletin of AAUP* March-April, 1987. AAUP estimates that approximately 10 percent of teaching faculty are in nontenurable positions, see Scott Heller, "Faculty Pay Up 5.9 Pct. to \$35,470: Best Rise in 15 Years, AAUP Says," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 8, 1987, pp. 1, 16.
13. Scott Heller, "Part-time Teachers Turn to Unions to Alter Status as 'Academic Stepchildren,'" *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 28, 1987, p. 1.
14. See, for example, the Massachusetts Society of Professors/Faculty Staff Union collective bargaining contract (1983-86) covering full-time and regular part-time faculty at the University of Massachusetts, pp. 59-62. Many NEA collective bargaining units in community colleges also include part-timers. For other examples see the *Chronicle of Higher Education* article cited above. However, other studies conclude that part-timers have not been well served by inclusion in full-timer units, see David Leslie's work cited above, pp. 59-66.
15. Bowen and Schuster, p. 244.
16. *College: The Undergraduate Experience in America*, and *Professors. A National Resource Imperiled* are excellent examples of this, although they offer good data, analyses, and insights into the problems confronting higher education. Education reform sounds good, but it tends to lose momentum when legislators begin the funding process, see *Education Daily*, April 14, 1987, pp. 1-3, for insight into what is necessary to sustain reform, at least in the public schools.
17. The Standing Committee does not underestimate the expense or time involved in making these conversions, given the extent of the problem and the limited funds available. What must occur first, of course, is the making of a commitment by the institution—faculty, administration, and board—to this course of action. Once the commitment has been made, the administration and faculty can cooperate in developing new policies and seeking the additional funding that will be necessary.